

# IN THESE TIMES

Noam Chomsky p. 13  
and  
Costa-Gavras p. 14

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## Arafat under Fire



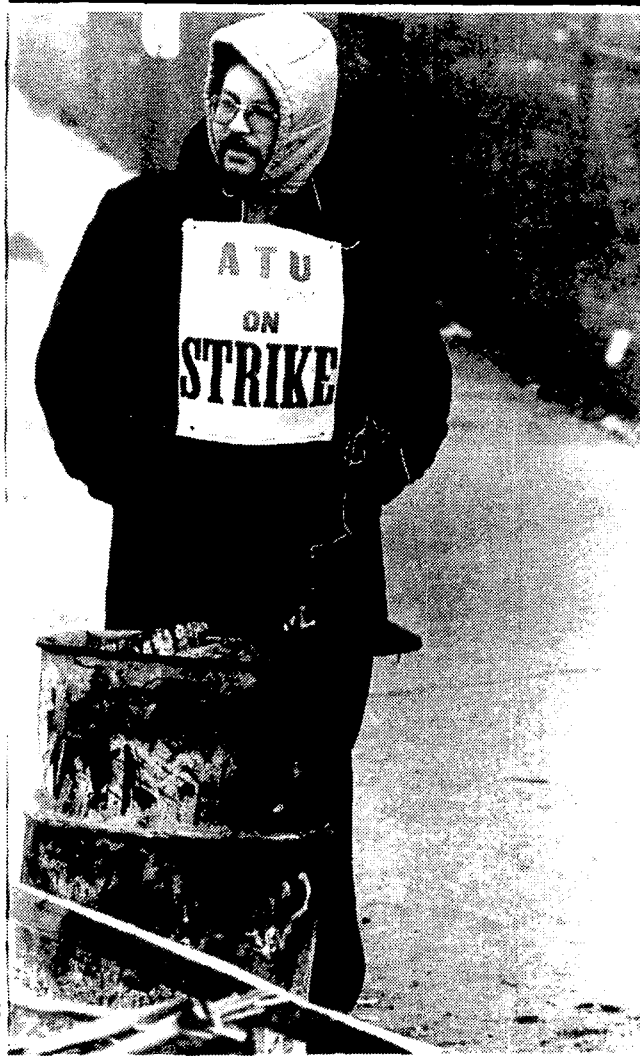
*He is no match for Syria.*

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Der Spiegel



# THE INSIDE STORY



Paul Comstock

## At Greyhound, management seeks a confrontation

By Dan La Botz

CHICAGO

In Chicago they burned their safe driving patches. In San Francisco they burned the company's contract offer. In cities from New York to Los Angeles and in little towns and big burbs in between thousands of striking Greyhound workers shouted, "The answer is no," as they rallied and rejected the company's call to return to work on November 14.

"At the beginning, the issue was money," said John Rice, a Greyhound bus driver from Chicago and a member of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1303. "Now the issue is how this company feels about me. For 23 years they've been telling me I'm something—now I'm nothing."

For decades Greyhound Lines has been selling swift, safe passenger service based on the work of its 15,000 employees, 12,700 of whom belong to the ATU. But for the last year the company has been selling concessions—and since the strike began November 2 it has been pushing a take-away contract in a campaign that appears calculated to demoralize the strikers. Greyhound claims the concessions are necessary to beef up its decreasing profits. According to company figures, net earnings after costs were \$5 million for the third quarter of 1983. But the union estimates the profits for the same period to be closer to \$19 million.

The contract proposal itself was the first part of the campaign: a take-away of 30 percent in wages, pension benefits, health and welfare coverage and conditions (scheduling, reporting times, and so on). Ben Ward, a driver out of the Chicago terminal who has worked for Greyhound for 23 years, said, "They don't tell about the holidays they want to take from us, the cuts in mileage pay, major medical, fringe benefits, cost of living. They don't say how much we pay for our uniforms—\$200 for coat and pants, not including shirt, shoes, overcoat and belt. Since 1964 we got 4.5 percent meal

allowance. Now they want to give us only 2.5 percent, and you can't eat at McDonald's for that."

Full-time Greyhound drivers are paid by the mile, with wages varying due to the difficulty of the terrain, weather conditions and breakdowns. "Extra-board" drivers (drivers without regular routes) receive a small base pay, but often only work six days in two weeks.

Ward said, "In 20 years they have not really given us a raise. We're like commission drivers. If we turn some wheels and miles, we make some money. But if we don't turn some wheels, we don't make money."

Under the contract proposed by Greyhound, hourly rates for new employees would be lower, and the use of part-timers would be unlimited. "We see the take-aways as 30 percent plus, once you add up the tid-bits," said David E. Mix, president and business agent of Local 1225 in San Francisco. "No one has calculated the use of part-time people, which could be disastrous. They could cut our permanent people back to 50 percent within 10 years, maybe sooner. You pay part-timers only 80 percent of the full-timers' wages, and you don't pay them any benefits."

The handling of the bargaining was also part of the concession campaign. In the negotiations before the contract expired, the union offered to work under the then-current contract "if Greyhound would move off its position of demanding massive cutbacks." The union offered to submit all issues in negotiation to final and binding arbitration, and also said it would extend the contract without improvements for one year. But the company rejected all the union's proposals. It appeared bent on confrontation.

Then the company took its concessions campaign to the public on November 7 with full-page newspaper advertisements across the country under the headline: "Greyhound wants you to know..." The company said its drivers were averaging \$35,744 a year—more than \$10,000 above its competitors—that regional airlines were a threat and that it wanted reductions in wages and benefits.

The ad, while exaggerating the wages of full-time workers by adding benefits to wages, also neglected to mention the thousands of employees at the bottom of the seniority list who suffer periodic furloughs and the extra-board drivers who regularly work only a few days a week.

The first week of the strike the company started calling those furloughed employees and offering them jobs as driver instructors. Maria Robles, a Greyhound driver in Chicago who was hired in April of 1981 has had only nine months of intermittent driving experience because of the many layoffs. Yet on November 4, the company called her and offered her a job as a driver instructor.

"They said they called us since we've been on furlough so long they wanted to approach us first. Since we were hurting the worst they were sympathizing with us, they told us," Robles said. Asked if she was taking the job, Robles answered, "Hell no. I don't want to break the union."

On the same day that it ran the "want you to know" ad, the company announced that it had accepted applications from more than 45,000 people and was preparing to resume service. Greyhound also delivered an ultimatum that drivers who hadn't returned to work by November 14 would be replaced by the new applicants. The company announced on November 10 that 300 had returned to work. Then on November 13, the company ran another ad under the banner "Greyhound is back... at half price" and offered limited schedules between

major cities at cut rates, claiming, "Greyhound is rolling again."

Union members believe the company had no intention of operating with new-hire scabs, but that the entire campaign was conceived to demoralize and divide union members. "The idea," said John Rice, "was to have 40 percent of us back to work. They have only about 1.5 percent."

The union countered the company campaign with its rallies around the country on November 14. Mix said that his San Francisco local with 1,650 members, 1,200 of whom work for Greyhound, has had one scab; 350 union members came to the rally. His local has had support from members of the Meatcutters who work for Armour (recently sold by Greyhound Corp.) and from Longshoremens and Teamsters.

Kordel Linder of Forrest City, Ark., works out of the Memphis, Tenn., terminal about 50 miles away where he is a driver and driver instructor, and he reported that there was a demonstration of 200 in Memphis. His ATU Local 1500 has about 300 members, of whom three were strike-breaking.

The strikers don't believe the company will be able to run with strike breakers. "I don't think they can operate effectively. They'll be ill-trained," says Linder. "Especially with the onset of bad weather, it will be dangerous, not only to the passengers, but to other drivers."

Linda Kilmer, a member of Omaha Local 1126 who works out of Chicago, said, "I feel sorry for the passengers. I wouldn't ride with somebody who's been on the street for two weeks. When we trained it was a 12-week training; that was Greyhound's standard." Even for an experienced city or charter driver, running scheduled service with multiple tickets, connections, feeder lines and baggage arrangements is not an easy job to learn.

The Greyhound drivers, mechanics and clerks in the ATU seem determined not to be the PATCO of the private sector or the Phelps-Dodge of the highways. "Just about every other union member in the U.S. bears some degree of shame for PATCO's demise," said Linder. "If they had had the kind of support we have had they wouldn't have been defeated." PATCO, according to Linder, was a different case because it found itself faced with the full weight of the government.

Yet it may not be so different. The same could happen to the Greyhound strikers. While the rallies around the country by ATU members and some other union supporters brought the company back to the bargaining table, and although there is some talk of mediation, it doesn't necessarily mean that the company is prepared to settle.

Greyhound may only be returning to the table to prove to the government that it is "bargaining in good faith," while it really plans to deal dirty with the strikers. When the company ran scab buses on November 17, union members in several cities (Washington, D.C., Chicago, Pittsburgh and Detroit among them) beat up the new drivers. After provoking such violence, Greyhound has received an injunction that limits picketing and threatens expensive sanctions against the union in Pittsburgh, and more injunctions are being sought in other cities. As the buses have begun to roll, it appears that union-busting has begun in earnest. In that case, labor solidarity would have to be more than symbolic. To win, union leaders and members would have to be prepared to defy the injunction and stop the buses.

Dan LaBotz writes regularly on labor issues for *In These Times*.

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## IN THESE TIMES



Yasir Arafat's PLO army may not even last as an independent force until the end of the year.

United Nations

# Behind the ancient Syrian game plan

By Fred Halliday

L O N D O N

**A** FEW MONTHS AGO I WAS talking to an Arab diplomat who had long impressed me by his access and prescience. It was soon after the outbreak of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) mutiny against leader Yasir Arafat on May 6, and I wanted to know what the future held for the Palestinian organization and its leader.

"It means that the PLO was founded in 1964 and will disappear in 1984," he said. As *In These Times* went to press, he seems to have been wrong: while Syria and its client forces press in on the last PLO stronghold in the Lebanese city of Tripoli, it seems that Arafat's forces may not even last as an independent force to the end of the year.

The immediate causes of this crisis have been aired by both sides. Arafat blames Syria for its failure to help the Palestinians during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon last year. Syria accuses Arafat of conspiring to reach a compromise with the U.S. and Jordan, on the lines of the Reagan peace plan. Syria's Palestinian supporters accuse Arafat of following favoritism, corruption and dictatorial methods to dominate in the PLO.

The political perspectives of PLO dissidents like Abu Saleh and Abu Musa are, to put it mildly, limited. The PLO, like the IRA, has strict distinctions between its political and military wings. Its strategic vision, such as it is, is monopolized by the former. Abu Saleh and Abu Musa claim to represent an intransigent hostility to Israel and to any U.S.-sponsored plan. In fact, their demagoguery is a smoke-screen behind which Syria can maneuver to impose its own control.

To understand Syria's moves it is helpful to summon up one of the older specters of the Mideast, one that long pre-dates such contemporary concerns as the East-West conflict, the Arc of Crisis, the Northern tier or even the state of Israel.

This specter is the Fertile Crescent, the ring of cultivated land that runs from the confluence of the Tigris and the Euphrates at the edge of the Persian Gulf up through Iraq and Syria and then down through what today are Lebanon, Jordan

and Israel. From Bastra on the Gulf to Gaza on the Mediterranean, this semicircle has long been the center of Mideastern civilization and society, and since World War I it has been the arena in which Arab politics has been fought out.

Since their state was set up in 1920, the Syrians have sought to dominate the Crescent. This has meant asserting dominance over the three smaller states to the west and southwest—Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine/Israel—and keeping the rival states of Iraq and Egypt at bay. One way to do this has been to ally with one or other against the third—thus Egypt and Syria were formally united into one state in 1958-1961—and the other has been to find a cause and an outside backing to keep both at arms length.

Israel's establishment in 1948 certainly changed the parameters of this policy, but the game continued. Unable to dominate Israel, Syria has nonetheless continued to try and assert control over the Arab states and use its militant hostility to Israel as a further means of asserting its claim to leadership. Syria's invasion of Lebanon in 1976, its attempt to invade Jordan in 1970 and its manipulative policy toward the PLO have all been part of this. So, too, has its bitter conflict with the fellow Ba'thist regime in Iraq, and its recent denunciation of Egypt, the state with which it fought the 1973 Arab-Israeli war so closely.

In its current phase, the Syrian tragedy has found new allies with which to prosecute its goals. In Lebanon the Moslem part of the population—long subservient to what is now a Christian minority—has accepted a protective Syrian presence. And now that the U.S. has become an open ally of the Christian regime, and continues to back Israel, Syria finds itself with a natural ally in Lebanon.

While it continues to denounce Iraq, Syria has found an ally in Khomeini's Iran, whom it supports in the war with Baghdad, just as Syria has formed an alliance with Egypt's rival, Libya, in that regional conflict.

The Syrian attitude toward the Palestinian conflict was always straightforward: it backed the PLO in the manner and to the extent that this served Syria's state interests. While the PLO and many non-Arab supporters hoped for an independent Palestinian state, Syria envisioned

ed such an advance for the Palestinians as possible only if the new state was under Syrian control. Another section of the Fertile Crescent beyond its domain would have been worse than the present.

## Syrian strong-arming.

Earlier this year, Syria saw its chance. Jordan and the PLO tried to come up with a favorable response to the Reagan peace plan. Arafat had even persuaded part of the PLO leadership to support him in this decision. But Syria was able to influence enough of the PLO to prevent Arafat from clinching the deal: the PLO-Jordanian talks were broken off on April 10. Arafat was then shown to be both weak and isolated. King Hussein of Jordan could not "jump on board" the Reagan plan because he had nothing to deliver.

President Hafez al-Assad of Syria, on the other hand, now had the cards in his

hands. He could attack Arafat as head of the PLO. He could maintain his forces in Lebanon. He could give greater backing to dissident personnel in the Jordanian armed forces. (Western foreign ministries have recently shown great alarm about the possibility of a coup in Jordan.) He could tighten his blockade on an enfeebled Iraq.

Above all, however, he could turn to the Americans and say that if they wanted to cut a deal in the Mideast, they would have to do it through him. He is, so he claims, the dominant Arab power. He, unlike King Hussein, can deliver the PLO. The longstanding aim of dominating the Fertile Crescent seems to be within Assad's grasp: his position will be recognized, Egypt will be displaced as the American interlocutor and, sooner or later, Iraq will succumb to Iran's revolutionary legions.

Assad's strength—but also his trouble—is that his ancient Fertile Crescent strategy is now overlaid with the fashionable innovation of the East-West conflict. The Russians back him, even as they curse him: they have sent new short-range missiles and up to 4,000 military personnel to protect Syria in recent months. They are terrified he might get into a fight with Israel that he inevitably would lose.

The Russians are caught by a commitment to one of their remaining allies. They continue to back Arafat as head of the PLO, yet they have no ability to stop Assad from pursuing his purge. The strategic costs of withdrawing support from Syria would simply be too great for them.

But if this Soviet support, grumbling as it is, is of use to Assad, Washington's policy is not. Ronald Reagan could get a deal with Syria, but it would involve regional and international costs that the cold warriors of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue would be reluctant to pay—acceptance of Syrian influence in the Fertile Crescent, negotiation on major matters with a Soviet ally. Reagan is almost incapable of doing this.

The Syrians, however, have got their hostages—the U.S. Marines in Beirut. The risk is that a lot more smiling Shi'ite martyrs will be revving up their engines if the U.S. fails to grasp the ancient logic of the Fertile Crescent. ■

*Fred Halliday's latest book is **The Making of the Second Cold War**.*

**When the PLO-Jordanian talks were broken off on April 10, PLO leader Yasir Arafat was shown to be both weak and isolated.**



# INSHORT

## Policy by poll

If all it took was the agreement of the constitutional law scholars, U.S. Rep. Ted Weiss' (D-N.Y.) contention that President Reagan broke the law by invading Grenada would have a lot of support. Constitutional experts from former Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg to the faculty of the University of North Carolina law school to the lawyers of the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee have condemned the invasion as a violation of Congress' power to declare war, as well as the charters of the United Nations and the Organization of American States. So why does Weiss' resolution to impeach Reagan for that constitutional breach look so quixotic? Lack of congressional support, for one thing. The resolution's seven Democratic co-sponsors—Michigan's John Conyers and George Crockett, California's Julian Dixon and Mervyn Dymally, Maryland's Parren Mitchell, Henry Gonzalez of Texas and Gus Savage of Illinois—don't include some outspoken opponents of the Grenada invasion, most notably Ron Dellums. Dellums believes "a resolution of inquiry" into the invasion's legality, which he plans to introduce, should precede an impeachment motion.

Even Weiss doesn't expect his measure to win majority support, but he believes it will attract more co-sponsors "as popular support for the invasion wanes once more information comes out. It's very difficult politically to buck what seems to be a popular tide across the country backing the president," he told *In These Times*. Historically, impeachment resolutions attract little initial support—Rep. Robert Drinan was the lone sponsor of a 1972 resolution to impeach Richard Nixon for extending the war to Cambodia, Weiss notes. But even if popular opinion supports the president now, he says, the impeachment resolution is necessary "to hold Reagan accountable to the Constitution."

Not even pro-invasion congressmembers accept the administration's claim that a threat to American lives made the Marines' landing in Grenada a rescue mission, not an invasion. "You can't find a clearer case where the president has usurped the war-making powers of Congress," Weiss says. "One of the things I hope this resolution accomplishes is to spur debate across the country and get people back to some fundamental principles—otherwise the Constitution doesn't mean anything." Meanwhile, Weiss fears, polls, not principles, will guide national policy. "In the media, from Ted Koppel on down I'm hearing, 'Well, O.K., you say the invasion is unconstitutional, and yet a vast majority of people support it.' My understanding of the Constitution is that its provisions apply whether a majority of people support them at a given time or not."

## Glenn comes out

Although the gay vote can't be categorized as a monolithic interest bloc, gay Democrats have been trying to organize to wield influence in the 1984 elections, forming a national association to link Gay Democratic Clubs across the country, for example. Most of the Democratic presidential candidates have responded, if cautiously, to gays' growing political organizational and financial strength by pledging support for anti-discrimination measures, including the Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights bill currently before Congress. But John Glenn, long silent on the issue, has come out of the closet, telling an Americans for Democratic Action forum November 3 that he "will not advocate or promote homosexuality" by supporting the bill. "The acceptability of sexual or life styles reflect personal values and convictions," Glenn said, and he doesn't believe the Civil Rights Act should be extended into "areas of personal behavior."

National Gay Task Force director Virginia Apuzzo shot off a mailgram to the Glenn campaign, challenging his conflation of civil rights protection with advocacy. "Guaranteeing the civil rights of lesbians and gay men is no more 'promotion of homosexuality' than protecting the rights of believers of a particular religion is promotion of that religion," Apuzzo noted. Her mailgram also went to Glenn supporter Sen. Paul Tsongas (D-Mass.), a co-sponsor of the civil rights bill, and Judy Goldsmith of the National Organization for Women (NOW), which is set to ponder its presidential endorsement next month.

## Remember this November

Proponents of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) barely had time to celebrate their House Judiciary Committee victory November 9 when the amendment went down to defeat in the full House—by only six votes—November 15. Congressional ERA backers are promising to reintroduce the legislation in early 1984. In between the two votes NOW released a breakdown of ERA's House supporters by party, state, race and sex, finding some interesting trends. Although some Republicans like to think the party's anti-women's rights image is due mostly to the president, on the ERA House Republicans follow Reagan's lead. Of the amendment's 241 House sponsors, only 27 percent were Republicans; in the Judiciary Committee nine of 11 Republicans opposed sending the measure to the full House for a vote. NOW's emphasis on electing women seems justified by their ERA record—82 percent of women representatives were ERA sponsors. But the best ERA record belongs to congressional blacks—all of them signed on to sponsor the amendment.

—Joan Walsh

## Strike ends, turmoil doesn't

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

—Eighty thousand striking government workers, teachers and students returned to work November 14 across British Columbia, as a public sector strike that would have eventually seen 200,000 on picket lines was halted by its leaders.

Most of the issues prompting the strike remained unresolved. Although some strikers felt relieved to be back to work, most were confused and uncertain about the settlement. The labor coalition that launched the action, Operation Solidarity, announced it "has reached an avenue of consultation with the government." But the terms of an agreement to end the escalating strike were vague and backed by no firm guarantees from Bill Bennett, premier of the Social Credit government.

In its budget of last July Social Credit had mounted a massive legislative attack on the economic, social and civil rights of working and unemployed people in British Columbia. With an eye to the policies of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, Social Credit proposed "downsizing" government by 25 percent. But in fact, the government deficit was set to increase by 12 percent with spending on corporate megaprojects, cost-overruns on mismanaged transit expansion and a bulging propaganda budget for TV ads and freshly painted tri-color logos all over the province.

In July, the Human Rights Commission was abolished overnight, affecting women, minorities, lesbians and gays. Bills were introduced overriding collective bargaining by public sector unions, giving government the power to fire at will and without proven cause, disregarding existing contracts. Education from primary through post-secondary was cut to crisis levels; university tenure was to be abolished. Social services, already underfunded in a recession economy, were to be slashed. Within weeks significant funds were gone for the disabled, senior citizens and others receiving social assistance. In short, the budget represented the most right-wing legislation ever introduced at one time in Canada.

The opposition was swift and surprisingly strong. In the legislature, the opposition New Democratic Party attempted to stall passage of the bills by debate and filibuster. An unprecedented coalition of diverse organizations came together with one goal: withdrawing all the legislation. British Columbia's powerful trade unions united under the banner of "Operation Solidarity." A province-wide network of community associations and some union locals became the Solidarity Coalition. Together the two groups represented a majority of the province's citizens.

Increasing frustration gave way to militancy as the government began to make some of its offensive bills law. The British Columbia Government Employees Union (BCGEW) began a legal strike on November 1 over its contract and the collective bar-

gaining rights of the entire public sector. Other unions planned to join the strike, each with an additional set of demands. A week later, the education sector, primarily the Teachers Federation, virtually shut down schools in a surprising display of unity. New demands included changes in education legislation and funding, no reprisals for any strikers and guarantees of "the restoration of human rights." The walkout had now become a political strike not exclusively related to labor issues.

None of these demands were assured when Operation Solidarity ended the walkout, claiming public opinion would turn against unions if the strike continued. They also cited complaints from welfare recipients who were hurt by the lack of

some essential services.

But the Solidarity Coalition was angry that it wasn't consulted when the strike was halted. Charging that labor bureaucracy ended the action while momentum was building, the coalition promised to sustain its opposition to the government's outstanding issues.

Though the BCGEW emerged with what it called "a no-concessions contract," Solidarity's momentum has faltered. Two days after the agreement that ended the strike, cabinet ministers were claiming ignorance of any deal for strikers and threatening reprisals against the teachers. Operation Solidarity, calling the situation a "truce," promised to resume strike action if "consultation" proved fruitless.

—Chris Kelly



Mel King couldn't sweep white liberal vote.

## King coalition wasn't enough

BOSTON—Raymond Flynn's recent landslide win over opponent Melvin King proved it is no easy task for a black candidate to be elected mayor of a city without a close-to-majority black population.

Although King captured 97 percent of Boston's black vote, he won only 20 percent support among white voters. In Boston, where only about 20 percent of the electorate is black, King would have had to get close to 35 percent of the white vote to win—a tall order for a black candidate in any major U.S. city.

King hoped to carry most of the white liberal vote, but instead shared that bloc with Flynn, whose populist appeal likely

swung voters who would have supported the leftist King in a race with a status-quo candidate.

Still, King's 20 percent of the white vote was better than some victorious black mayoral candidates around the country. In Chicago, Harold Washington captured about 18 percent of the white vote, but won with a high turnout of that city's large black population. In Atlanta in 1981, Andrew Young won with only 13 percent of the white vote.

The 44-year-old Flynn, meanwhile, swept the conservative Irish sections of Boston and cleaned up in white neighborhoods that had supported other candidates in the preliminary election. While King increased his voter support from 49,000 to 67,000 between the preliminary and final election, Flynn's vote tally almost tripled, from 48,000 to 128,000.

The 1983 mayoral contest will be recognized as a watershed event here for years to come. It was the first time in Boston history that a black candidate made it to the final election, and Flynn became the city's first South Boston mayor. Remarkably, the race was free of the racial tension that has divided the city in the past.

Enthusiasm at King's headquarters election night made it look like a victory party. Henry Chinn, a 36-year-old King supporter, placed it in perspective. "I think there is still a problem in the city electing a black mayor," Chinn said. "But I think there were a lot of victories won. King just didn't win the office. The ground has been paved." King visited Flynn headquarters election night to congratulate his rival and praise him for a campaign free of racial appeals.

Both Flynn and King had promised to focus more on problems facing the neighborhoods than on downtown development. Flynn, who will succeed 16-year incumbent Kevin White, reiterated his pledge on election night, promising to build a government "where the only special interest group will be the people in the neighborhoods of this city."

Boston's left scored an unequivocal victory with the election of David Scondras to the City Council. Scondras, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), was the first gay person to seek city office in Boston, and was endorsed by King as well as the city's Black Political Task Force.

—Peter Ajemian



NOV. 12 RALLY

## Large but not broad-based crowd protests

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

CONSIDERING THE FREEZING winds and the popularity of the American attack on Grenada, the turnout on November 12 for a march and rally to protest the invasion and Reagan administration policies in Central America was impressive. Organizers estimated 50,000 and the U.S. Park Police 20,000; a fair guess would be somewhere in between.

The demonstration was conceived last summer by CISPES, the main organization of solidarity with the Salvadoran guerrillas, the Mobilization for Survival and other anti-war and solidarity groups. Intended originally to protest the administration's support of the *contras* in Nicaragua and the Salvadoran government, the event was given new focus and energy by the invasion of Grenada.

One marcher with a contingent of four busloads from Ithaca, N.Y., said the public response to the invasion had convinced her and others of the need to demonstrate. "When everyone reacted so favorably, that made us more likely to come," said Hallie Del Rosa, a Cornell University student.

But the demonstration received little attention in the press—even in comparison to a similar protest against Reagan's Central American policies in March 1982. The *Washington Post* relegated the march to local news in its "Metro" section; the *New York Times*, which has

continued to oppose the invasion editorially, buried it in the news section; and the television networks barely mentioned it.

This lack of attention was probably the result of several factors. Besides Jesse Jackson, demonstration speakers were mostly little known. While the announced goals of the demonstration were modest



Rick Reinhard

in other marches. There were few blacks and practically no labor unions. (I spotted two signs representing locals.) But there was a plethora of support committees for various revolutions of Communist/Marxist-Leninist/Revolutionary/Proletarian Leagues, Alliances, Parties and Pre-Parties. The Socialist Workers Party seemed to make the march a major sales priority. Rather than one table for selling books, they had three at one of the rally's three starting points.

The sentiment of the marchers ranged from Peace-Corps idealism ("To win the people's hearts in El Salvador, you can't support a government that is oppressive," one student told me) to a kind of punk revolutionism. "We all think Reagan is a filthy scum. We think Hinckley should have used a bigger gun," one member of a "Revolutionary Artists Collective" in Indiana, Pa., told me. While some marchers chanted different variations of "Reagan must go," others preferred "Drive the Yankees to the sea/ El Salvador must be free." (One man with a bullhorn tried unsuccessfully to rouse the marchers in his vicinity with "Defeat U.S. imperialism/ Build a labor party.")

The march took far longer than planned, partly because of the larger-than-expected crowd and partly because members of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's student organization, CARP, tried to prevent marchers from passing in front of the White House.

By the time the 35,000 arrived at the ellipse behind the White House, the sun was already setting and the wind-chill had begun to resemble Chicago in January. Speakers had to shout into the wind and those who were not experienced found their words blown back at them. Other than Jackson, the most effective presentations were musical performances by Holly Near and Ronnie Gilbert, Peter, Paul and Mary and Bernice Reagon.

Jackson's speech was standard campaign

Continued on page 6



# Nov. 12

Continued from page 5  
paign oration ("Human race, not the arms race," "Rainbow coalition") and was the best received. But he did get a few boos when he called for a UN "peace-

keeping force" in Lebanon.  
Former Sen. George McGovern was invited to speak, but cancelled because of laryngitis. Other presidential candidates were not invited. Marcia Mersky of the November 12 Coalition explained that Jackson had been invited because of "his position in the black community" rather than his presidential candidacy. "We weren't particularly looking to ask presidential candidates," Mersky said.

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### November

6

1945—HUAC begins an investigation of seven radio commentators. HUAC spokesperson: "The time has come to determine how far you can go with free speech."

1968—At an RMN victory party, advance man J. Roy Goodearle: "Why don't we get all the members of the press and beat them up? I'm tired of being nice to them."

1976—Disclosure of Operation Shamrock: since 1947, RCA Global, ITT World and Western Union International have made international telegraph traffic available to the NSA.

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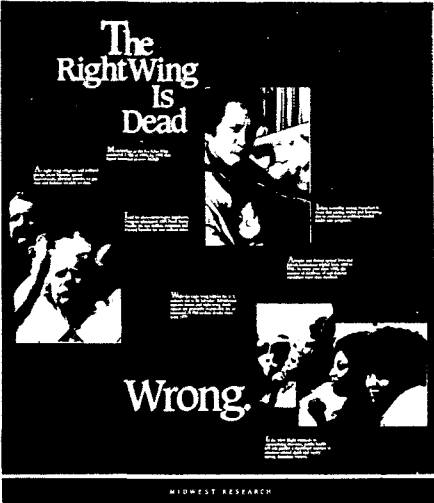
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Representatives Patricia Schroeder (D-Colo.) and Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.), NOW President Judy Goldsmith and several Catholic Bishops were invited to speak but declined. Both Schroeder and Goldsmith were reportedly wary of the demonstration's political make-up. Rep. Ted Weiss (D-N.Y.), one of eight House members who have called for Reagan's impeachment in the wake of the Grenadian invasion (see page 4), spoke at the beginning of the rally.

Most of the speakers represented liberation movements and the governments those groups support. A Sandinista student and the Washington representative of the Salvadoran FMLN-FDR were among them. In the balance of speakers and themes for the rally, the demonstration veered away from the broad goal of opposing American intervention toward expressing solidarity with the Sandinistas and the FMLN-FDR.

The main labor coalition against American intervention, the National Labor Committee in Support of Human Rights

and Democracy in El Salvador, sponsored by the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers, refused to join the coalition because of the far-left groups among its sponsors. As a result, members of the coalition who wanted labor participation and a more popular focus found themselves caught between pillar and post. In the coalition itself, they didn't have much clout because they were not seen as representing a large constituency for the demonstration. And when they tried to woo labor, they were told, in the words of Gordon Haskell, the representative of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), that the "complexion of the demonstration was too far left."

"From the beginning we were not able to get the participation of people more toward the center who say they are opposed to intervention," Haskell said.

Some Coalition members want to preserve it as a rallying point for opposition to American policy, but the coalition is not expected to survive the usual post-mortems.



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By Marjorie Miller

SAN DIEGO

**S**IXTEEN MONTHS AGO, MEXICO sent shock waves through the international banking community by suddenly announcing that it could not afford to make payments on its \$80 billion foreign debt.

Bankers were panic-stricken that Mexico would default on its loans and set off a series of defaults in other Latin American countries. More than 1,000 banks worldwide were heavily exposed in Mexico, including nine of the largest U.S. banks. According to *The Economist*, the U.S. banks had the equivalent of half of their capital and reserves loaned to Mexico.

Mexico's currency was devalued from 25 pesos to the dollar in January 1982 to 150 pesos to the dollar by the end of the year. The government briefly imposed exchange controls and turned bank depositors' dollars into pesos. In a blow to the solar plexus of financiers, outgoing President Jose Lopez Portillo nationalized the country's banks. But the country that triggered a crisis in the banking world just as suddenly has become the Latin American sweetheart of the financial community.

One reason bankers are so enamored of Mexico today is that the government of President Miguel de la Madrid, who took power in December, has treated the sick Mexican economy with a prescription handwritten by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It has dramatically cut government spending, forced a reduction in workers' real wages, increased exports, decreased imports and lowered inflation from more than 100 percent last year to a projected rate of 80 percent this year. They were so pleased that Mexico's Finance Minister Jesus Silva Herzog was acclaimed for his good work by *Euromoney* magazine and presented an award at the September meeting of the IMF and World Bank.

But another reason for the love affair has little to do with changes in Mexico. It's simply that the economic picture in the rest of Latin America is so grim that Mexico looks good by comparison. Bankers worried about losing their shirts in

## MEXICO

# Praise from IMF, but at a high cost

Brazil, for example, have turned their attention from worries in Mexico.

While Mexico has restructured most of its foreign debt, Brazil's is made up of shorter-term loans, some of which still must be renegotiated. Last spring the Brazilian government fell behind on loan payments they had arranged a few months earlier, and the government continues to fall behind on its interest payments.

In Mexico, there have been strikes in the universities and other non-essential industries, but the government, through its union ally, the Mexican Workers Congress (CTM), has kept workers under control. But in Brazil the poor have begun to respond actively and violently to harsh cutbacks imposed by the IMF. They have rioted and looted supermarkets for food in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and the northeast section of the country.

All of Latin America is in an economic depression, Pedro Pablo Kuczynsky, president of First Boston International, recently told a conference of economists at Stanford University. Kuczynsky, who formerly worked at the World Bank and the IMF, said the per capita income in Latin America has dropped 10 percent and that basic food consumption in poor areas of such countries as Peru is down by as much as 15 percent.

The countries' problems of high unemployment and inflation are compounded by their interdependence; one-third of all their trade is inter-regional, but they no longer can afford to buy from each other. Total foreign debt in Latin America is three times the annual income in the region, Kuczynsky said. The total debt is \$330 billion, while their combined income from exports is only \$95 billion. In interest payments this year, Latin America will owe \$40 billion—42 percent of the

expected income. The proportion is even higher—50 percent—for Chile and Argentina, and 46 percent for Brazil and Mexico.

In Mexico, the ratio of debt to income from exports is greater than in the region as a whole. At the end of the year, Mexico's foreign debt will be about \$84 billion, while the income from exports will be about \$20 billion.

But here again, bankers have expressed less concern about Mexico. First of all, they see the Mexican government as stable, since it has been ruled for the last 54 years by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). Second, Mexico's economy is tied far more closely to the U.S. than to the rest of Latin America. Seventy percent of Mexico's export money and tourism come from the U.S. The bankers believe that as the U.S. economy improves, so will Mexico's.

Third, and perhaps most important, is oil—the black gold that helped Mexico into its current economic crisis. Mexico remains the world's fourth largest oil producer, and as bankers understand it, that means guaranteed income. Mexico produces 2.75 million barrels a day, about half of which is exported, most of it to the U.S. (Brazil, by contrast, imports oil.)

The bankers are delighted with Mexico's adherence to the IMF recovery plan. President de la Madrid not only has met the guidelines, but has exceeded them, causing what one economist, critical of the government, called "a brutal shock treatment" for the poor and working classes.

While inflation has been running at 75-100 percent, wage increases have been held to 15-25 percent. Combined unemployment has been running about 45 percent and the creation of new

jobs has come to a near halt. Mexico needs to create 700,000 jobs a year to absorb new entrants to the work force. Because of this, the government cannot pursue a no-growth policy for long.

The government, under the IMF, has cut or eliminated subsidies for basic foods, such as bread and tortillas, gasoline and electricity.

"The depression, unemployment and drop in real salaries is more serious than it had to be," said Jaime Ros, a Mexico City economist. The economy, which grew at an exaggerated rate of 8 percent under Lopez Portillo, has fallen to a negative growth rate this year.

The IMF said Mexico had to cut government spending in half, to 8 percent of the GNP, but it will be even less than that this year. And Mexico has not borrowed as much money as was allotted by the IMF and the international banks.

Bankers are applauding Mexico for turning a trade deficit into a surplus. But

## One economist says government policy is a "brutal shock treatment" for the poor and working class.

some economists say the economy will worsen before it gets better. Although the industries need raw materials, spare parts and machinery, the government continues to devalue the peso to keep exports cheap and imports costly.

Ros suggests that the picture in Mexico is not quite as rosy as the bankers would like to think. The bankers might be taking political stability too much for granted. As unemployment increases—along with crime—many observers wonder how long the middle class will stand for its loss of buying power and erosion of social status, and how long it will be before workers start to rebel.

Marjorie Miller is a reporter in San Diego.



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**W**E WERE RIGHT, AS CHILDREN, to imagine that we reached China by digging. If we dug deep through the earth, we might begin to appreciate the vastness of the journey. For grown-ups, the most likely form of digging is reading. Indeed, this is a wise way to prepare for China, learning through its own voices before we begin to ask—and answer—too many Western questions.

The stories in *Seven Contemporary Chinese Women Writers* (Panda Books, \$4.95) describe the lives of women in China, the impact of the Cultural Revolution, the power of art to transcend individualism and the use of fiction to engage readers in social decisions. This summer I met six of these writers when I went to China in a 12-woman delegation of American authors, sponsored by the Chinese Writers Association.

The difference between my readings of *Seven Contemporary Chinese Women Writers* before I left and after I returned is the most accurate measure of the distance I travelled. At first, this collection disappointed me. The stories seemed stiff, with the emphasis on action and choice at the expense of emotional texture. Some authors' messages blared out, denying the audience a sense of discovery.

But after returning from China, re-reading the stories was like coming upon another book. I perceived new intricacies; I better understood the psychological nuances and I came to appreciate that, because the center of their struggle is so collective, these particular themes have profound personal authenticity.

While the protagonists are strong, complex women, the lack of feminist consciousness in these pieces will distress many American readers. Gladys Yang says in her introduction, "But there is no women's liberation movement in China, partly because women's position is infinitely better than before, partly because they see their problems in the general social context and are working for modernization to lighten their burdens." Although Yang's point about the special trials faced by women in a developing country is significant, it does not address the discrimination they encounter daily. Such experience could be more thoroughly explored in this volume.

As we were travelling, one of my greatest frustrations was the duplicity between the official rhetoric of equality and the reckless disregard about sexism. Everywhere we went, we were reminded that women hold up half the sky. They must have been very busy up there in the stars because only a few of our literary meetings were chaired by a woman. Of the

2,000 national members of the Chinese Writers Association, 140 are women. At a gathering in Guangzhou, a man greeted us warmly, recalling Gorky's sentiment about women being important because they are the mothers of poets and writers! In public, the Chinese women themselves were moderate about feminism. Several expressed amusement that we would travel in an all-female group. Yet as we became better acquainted, they were more candid about their restrictions and their anger.

Thus, while readers can't expect scintillating feminist analysis from these stories, they can learn a lot about the lives of Chinese women.



Ru Zhijuan's story, "The Path Through the Grassland," is a vivid study of the life of an oil worker as she faces the tensions between friendship and romantic love. The piece is set against the confusion of a people shakily emerging from the Cultural Revolution.

The contradictions are sharp—between individual desire and collective necessity, between the integrity of means vs. end, between friendship and marriage. No catharsis is offered. At the conclusion, the oil worker remains in a quandry, stimulating readers to consider such choices in their own lives.

Ru is an impressive woman, straightforward and tough. At our meeting in Shanghai, she spoke of the importance of writing about women's issues, such as female infanticide. When one American delegate said she considered that part of her own liberation was that she could now write in a male voice, Ru took a long draw on her cigarette and said, "I, myself, would be the last one to write about men."

A soldier during World War II, she is now working on a novel about "the War Against Japanese Aggression"—from a woman's point of view. This autumn, she and her daughter Wang Anyi will be travelling around the U.S. and participating in the visiting writers program at the University of Iowa.



"The Flight of the Wild Geese" by Huang Zongying portrays the precarious route taken by intellectuals who have managed to survive World War II, the Long March, the Great Leap

Forward and the Cultural Revolution. At first, this piece of narrative journalism seems to be about the career of a woman

scientist, Qin Guanshu, who works with herbs in the countryside. Qin had to abandon her beloved research on poplars, which was dubbed "a revisionist subject, because it has nothing to do with production." However, the story soon becomes a portrait of the author, writing a portrait of Qin. Huang becomes overwrought about whether to depict her subject as a hero (Qin has worked hard with the peasants to develop herbs) or a hopeless individualist (Qin has a reputation for irascibility and likes to do things her own way). The portrait of the portrait represents the strain between private feeling and public action endemic among Chinese professionals today.

*Qin's heart ached to see that many good species of Chinese poplars had been dug up. She often strolled among the small foreign poplar trees. Though a strong-willed woman, she thought of suicide several times. The specimens she had collected over the years had been taken away; her notebooks had disappeared. Furious, she had sold her books, which she had bought with the money she had saved, as waste paper, or simply burned them as kindling to light her stove.*

The reporter's nagging ambivalence about the value and veracity of her journalism reflects the disorientation Qin experienced on the shifting ground of the Cultural Revolution.



We met Zong Pu at a conference of the Chinese Writers Association where her work was also described as "concerned with the emotions and feelings of intellectuals." Although the Association provides full salaries to a few writers, Zong, like most artists in China or the U.S., supports herself with an outside job. She works at the Foreign Literature Research Institute of the Academy of Social Scientists.

As in other stories in the collection, Pu's "Melody in Dreams" explores the emotional life between two women—in this case between Murong Yeujun, a cellist in her 50s, and Liang Xia, her 19-year-old apprentice, who is the daughter of a close friend destroyed in the Cultural Revolution. "Aunt Yeujun" risks being labelled a counter-revolutionary for harboring the young woman, but she does it anyway, out of loyalty to her friend. The bond between the cautious, idealistic Aunt Yeujun and her fiery, cynical protégé is especially touching.

*'How many years have you been playing the cello?' Yuejun looked at her cello. 'You love music, don't you?' 'No, I don't....'*

*'Why bother learning to play the cello if you don't like it?'*

*'To make a living of course,' Liang Xia giggled.*

*If she had heard such a reply 10 years ago, Yuejun would have been insulted. Now nothing astonished her.*

The women give each other courage to continue and finally Liang becomes active in opposing the "Gang of Four." This story, like others in the collection, leaves an open end. Will young Liang return? Will she be destroyed like her parents? But the piece concludes with a curiously didactic note: "The dream of the people will be fulfilled. The reactionaries will be smashed. Historically this is inevitable." This rhetorical crescendo so contrasts with the natural vitality of the plot, I wonder if the story somehow has been abridged.



The longest and strongest contribution to the book is the novella, "At Middle Age" by Shen Rong. Shen is a sophisticated, successful novelist and playwright who has made one trip to America and is eagerly studying English in preparation for her next visit. Her novella sold three million copies and has been made into a popular movie. I saw the film in a crowded Beijing theater and then again on TV in Shanghai.

"At Middle Age" courageously examines the troubles of middle-aged professional women in today's China. While Chinese youth often face severe unemployment and disaffection, the middle-aged generation continues to be paid poorly for demanding jobs and sees little progress in their individual lives. "At Middle Age" opens as Dr. Lu Wenting, a 42-year-old eye surgeon, has cracked under the pressures. We meet her in a hospital bed where she is fighting back to life after a sudden heart attack.

Shen skillfully traces Dr. Lu's early dedication to medicine, her trials during the Cultural Revolution when the Red Guard burst into her operating room in the middle of delicate surgery, the demands of her young children, the loss of a close friend. The story swings back and forth between Dr. Lu's bed and the stresses that landed her there. "At Middle Age" closes with tempered optimism and—as always—an open end: "Leaning on her husband's shoulder, Lu walked slowly toward the gate...."

Shen Rong exudes the same kind of steady endurance that saved her hero. She began her career as a music editor and Russian translator, but a blood condition brought fainting spells and left her

# Women writers: their lives, their work, their hope



an invalid for 10 years. She turned to writing as a form of therapy, which she could work at between bouts of sickness. Now she is a popular and critical success. One late evening in Beijing, she invited four of us to tea in her fifth floor walk-up flat. She spoke with relief about the prospect of her two sons leaving home this year, giving her more space and time for writing. A shy, but determined woman, she was clearly finding middle age to be her prime.



Zhang Jie joined us at a meeting in Beijing. She is a quiet woman of 46. Her high-necked silk blouse posed an elegant contrast to the Maoist drabness of her colleagues and expressed the country's new liberalized code. Like many of the women we met, she spoke against the necessity of a separate feminist movement in China. "I don't think this exists politically or economically, but ideologically. We need to educate people who have prejudices against women. Meanwhile, women must do their own work arduously and diligently. Our commitments are the same as those of men."

Zhang's "Love Must Not Be Forgotten" is about a 30-year-old woman recalling the tragedy of her mother's unfulfilled love from an old romance. Sometimes the narrator spurns her mother's sentimentality; at other moments she admires it. By the end of the story, the protagonist calls for the freedom to remain single, quite a radical demand for a Chinese woman. Although she is writing about a love affair, she, like most of her contemporaries, avoids any explicit sexual description.

Attitudes toward sexuality were among the biggest distinctions between the Chinese and American writers. At a discussion with the editorial board of *Chinese Literature* magazine, the editor, Yang Xianyi, told us that it was easy to publish in China, as long as you were not writing about "unhealthy topics." He did not elucidate, but later we learned there is censorship of many sexual details. When Western work is translated, the sexual passages are often toned down or omitted. In Beijing, a translator told me that it would be hard to publish Grace Paley's stories because she has written so much about divorce. In Guangzhou, we were informed that some of Joyce Carol Oates' work had been selected for translation because it was not sexually explicit and because it addressed the problems of intellectuals.

If graphic heterosexuality is taboo,

homosexuality is extra-terrestrial. When one Chinese woman learned that some of us were lesbians, she was astonished. She spent a long time asking intense questions. This seemed like a useful exchange until—on one of the last days of the trip—she came up to me and declared, "There are no lesbians in China. Do you think homosexuality is—like alcoholism and drug addiction—a corruption of capitalism?"



Wang Anyi's "Life in a Small Courtyard" is a splendidly flourishing finale to this album of Chinese life. The crowded conditions and personal dilemmas faced by the inhabitants of the courtyard reflect the paradoxes raised by the previous authors. This story traces the frustration of Songsong, a young dancer, weary of her transient life and eager to settle down and have a child. As Songsong investigates the complicated lives of her neighbors, she comes to appreciate her husband's loyalty and the stimulation she finds in her art. The piece seems representative of Shanghai in its optimism, color, noise and cultural diversity.

The cosmopolitan quality is a tradition of Shanghai writers, Wang Anyi told me one day as we walked along the Bund, an old European financial district by the harbor. As much as Beijing reminded me of Moscow in its dour beige regimentation, Shanghai reminded me of a South-

ern European city. Laundry flapped on lines above the sidewalks where people squatted, washing clothes in bright porcelain bowls. Wang said that the definition of a local aesthetic was a topic of eager debate among Shanghai writers.

She was predictably happy with her lot as an artist. When she returns from a four-month trip to the U.S. with her mother, she will receive a full-time salary from the Chinese Writers Association to continue her fiction. She says the biggest trouble she experiences as a young writer is that she has known so little personal trouble that she doesn't have sufficient depth of experience from which to write well. She was being either modest or politically correct—probably both.

Before I went to China, I found the book's moral and political tread rather flat-footed. Now I understand that the fiction's comparative lack of emotional introspection simply reflects one of the borders between our two cultures. In comparison to Americans, the Chinese stew less in their personal psyches. Meanwhile, scrutiny of social conscience holds more fascination for readers there. Moreover, Mao's injunction to "go deep into the masses" in not just jargon. It expresses a classic Chinese appreciation for social context as well as a socialist commitment.

After talking with people about their tortuous experiences between 1966-1976, I realize more fully why five of these pieces hinge on the Cultural Revolution. The book is part of a national sigh of relief and bitterness.

Likewise, some of the book's shortcomings—such as class bias—become more visible after viewing a larger picture of the society. Why does a book that purports to represent contemporary China concentrate on the lives of professionals (or people aspiring to be professionals)—musicians, scientists, doctors, teachers, dancers, writers? Throughout the trip, I was frustrated by the disdain many "intellectuals" expressed for the "peasants." Perhaps part of my difficulty lay in the translators' choice of words—"intellectuals" and "peasants"—which conjured visions of pre-revolutionary France. So often, I was told that the problems of infanticide and birth control rested with people in the "countryside."

Of course, it is foolish to assume the Revolution could have wiped out thousands of years of feudal divisions. And the rift of privilege was exacerbated during the Cultural Revolution when "intellectuals" were persecuted not only for their own positions but also for the positions of their parents. Finally, I have to acknowledge that the extraordinary class bias of this collection is all too similar to the gaps in contemporary collections by Western women.

Doubtless a rhetorical style seen in this collection—such as the exhortatory messages concluding the stories by Zong Pu and Zhang Jie—is the legacy of a period when art was gauged by utilitarian value. Gladys Yang explains in her introduction: "The ultra-left line in literature in the past encouraged writing according to set formulas, and the 10 years of turmoil deprived young would-be writers of a good education and the access to classical Chinese and foreign literature needed to raise the quality of their work. This is evident from the immaturity, lack of sophistication and verbosity of certain stories. But the last few years have been a period of experimentation in finding fresher forms and styles, and women writers are paying attention to this. However, their works are above all significant because of their subject matter and the honest picture they present of life in China today."

Visiting China is, for most Westerners, an act of imagination. Taking this journey is like reading a good book in that the depth of experience hits us afterward and continues to reverberate in our lives. Only since I have been home, re-read their words and reconsidered my encounters have I begun to understand and appreciate *Chinese Women Writers*. I am eager to return.

Valerie Miner is a novelist and essayist who has written about women in Africa, Latin America, Europe and the U.S. Her novels include *Movement and Blood Sisters*.

By Valerie Miner

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華代

表團

將

美國女作家

烏金滾滾涌如泉

生產捷報飛滿天





# LETTERS

*In These Times* is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

## THANKS

MANY THANKS FOR THE SPLENDID Nov. 9 issue of *In These Times* that you filled with much needed news on Central America and the Caribbean. I enjoyed reading—and greatly profited from—that issue. Your attention to this important region and your paper's efforts to clarify difficult problems there are much appreciated.

—E. Bradford Burns  
Professor of Latin American History, UCLA

## BALANCE

RECENT LETTERS BY NANCY KRIEGER, Grace Flisser and others have underscored the need to form a balanced view of Israel and the value of Zionism to progressive Jews.

Flisser is correct to note the presence of Jews in Palestine since ancient times. What she doesn't mention is that the immigration of European Jews was met with violent resistance from nearly one million Palestinian Arabs who felt they were not properly consulted regarding the future of their homeland. Zionist leaders interpreted the Balfow Declaration to mean that the Jews should get all

of Palestine, and to hell with the Arabs, who were regarded as backward and inferior.

Flisser misses the point when she attacks Krieger for suggesting that Jews could have fought Nazi immigration laws. Hitler did not set up Auschwitz, Treblinka and Buchenwald overnight. Between 1933 and 1939 there was time to organize resistance against the Nazis through boycotts and to lobby Roosevelt for an end to restrictive immigration laws. In fact, many left-wing organizations rallied on behalf of the Jews. But Zionist leaders said no thanks.

On balance, Israel is no worse than the U.S. or Great Britain. After all, the Founding Fathers of this country supported slavery and had no qualms about using violence against Indians. The near extermination of the American Indian is perhaps the best known pre-Hitler example of genocide. And the Israelis have not come close to afflicting that level of violence on Arabs.

I support the right of Jews to emigrate to Israel and the right of Palestinians to return to their homeland. But the present situation is dangerous and can only lead to disaster. One could only hope that both the Israelis and the Palestinians perceive peace to be in their interests. Perhaps under these circumstances, a rational solution will emerge.

—Martin Celnick  
White Plains, N.Y.

## AFTRA

THE "\$10.5 MILLION SETTLEMENT" IN the suit brought against AFTRA by Tuesday Productions in San Diego (*ITT*, Nov. 2) was not the settlement but the original court-ordered judgment. The amount of the actual settlement, presumably a fraction of the judgment, was sealed by court order.

—Richard Gleckler  
New York, NY

## SANDINISTA ANTI-SEMITISM

WHY, MAY I ASK, DO JONATHAN Field or for that matter Paul Glickman and Ilane DeBare (*Letters*, *ITT*, Oct. 5, Nov. 9) attempt to slander the Sandinistas with anti-Semitism using the ADL report of some article that had appeared in *El Nuevo Diario*? *El Nuevo Diario* is a fully independent paper and pro-government only in the limited sense that 99 percent of the U.S. papers are pro-government (they do not call for its overthrow, but support the government generally). The paper is often critical of the Sandinistas. Does anti-Semitism in some U.S. paper prove the ruling Republican Party of the U.S. is anti-Semitic, too?

I fail to see the relevancy of this ADL report. The ADL has shown itself, by the other half-truths, to be an opponent of the Sandinistas and a willing tool for Reagan's policy. Their logical leap from one article to an entire government is preposterous. What country is fully free from racism? Certainly not the Nazi-influenced and Reagan-backed dictatorships of South America, yet I haven't read much about them from the ADL.

As a Jew, I am very disturbed about others in the Jewish community who always take the official Israeli position "right or wrong." That the Israelis have close alliances with oppressive Central American regimes in Guatemala and El

Salvador and are involved in arming the *contras* has been well documented in *In These Times*, and in other publications. I do not appreciate those who disgrace Judaism consistently using American Jews and their fears to further reactionary policies around the world. In the last analysis they who have dragged Judaism into the mire of earned disrespect in the eyes of freedom-loving people must be judged the destroyers of our religion and culture.

—Dennis B. Lazof  
Urbana, Ill.

## HIP BONE, LEG BONE

FOLLOWING RON RADOSH'S AND Joyce Milton's self-appraisal, James Weinstein defends *The Rosenberg File* (*ITT*, Sept. 14) on grounds that it is "non-ideological." This presents at least two problems. First it is wrong. Of Joyce Milton I can't speak, but it's neither unfair nor inaccurate to say that, for Ron Radosh, the book on the Rosenbergs is a major point on his re-routed political (ideological) itinerary, which includes re-evaluation of his political past in light of his more recent adoption of anti-Communist social democracy. Surely the thinking that went into the book is connected to the thinking that went into Radosh's *New Republic* article calling on the peace movement to cleanse itself of Communists. Numerous things can be said about his new itinerary, but not that it transcends ideology. The second problem with this claim is that it lands its users in a hole. Weinstein likes *The Rosenberg File*, so he calls it non-ideological, and dislikes various leftist criticisms, which he then labels ideological. But in its essential structure, this sort of labeling is a non-argument that echoes those old, dogmatic black and white couplets (scientific/utopian, revolutionary/counter-revolutionary, proletarian/bourgeois) Weinstein and Radosh like to think they have overcome. The evidence suggests otherwise.

—Paul Breines  
Brookline, Mass.

*James Weinstein replies: I reviewed the book, not the itinerary of one of its authors. On this latter point, I think Breines is correct. But if we learned only from books of those with whom we agree, we'd all remain pretty ignorant.*

## POLLING

I READ YOUR EDITORIAL ON THE Grenada invasion (*ITT*, Nov. 2) with interest and admiration—until the last paragraph, when you introduce a poll that indicated overwhelming public opposition to Reagan's invasion, and conclude by chastising the Democratic leaders for not opposing Reagan's policy.

I don't know where you got your poll, but the ones I've seen indicate substantial public support for Reagan's invasion: the *New York Times*/CBS poll, for example, found 51 percent supporting it and 37 percent opposing it. Other polls have found even greater support.

Maybe the support given Reagan is temporary. Or maybe the negative attitudes toward intervention revealed in polls over the last two years—attitudes on which *ITT* and the rest of us have counted heavily—are shallower than we had assumed.

The caution of Democratic politicians, however disappointing, should hardly surprise us. Indeed, the amount of criticism leveled against the administration—including that from Tip O'Neill, if you read him closely—has been surprisingly large. Should we not be supportive of even mild criticism of what they think may be a short-term triumph for Reagan?

—William B. Hixson Jr.  
East Lansing, Mich.

*Editor's note: The figures we gave were early polls immediately following news of the invasion, which was when the editorial was written. The figures changed drastically following media hype and Reagan's speech.*

IN THESE TIMES

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By Marty Oppenheimer

## PERSPECTIVES

# Confessions of a low-level victim of McCarthyism

**W**E HAVE HEARD from and about the stars, those who by accident or design were center-stage or at least on stage during the McCarthy years. But the minor characters, the rank-and-filers, the lesser victims have not been heard from. Many choose to remain silent, protected by the cloak of a 30-year anonymity, perhaps embarrassed by their role in those times, perhaps still vulnerable in their jobs and communities. Many, perhaps most, were not Communists, were not even close. None were security risks by any stretch of the imagination.

In the '80s, 110 draftees came to the attention of the Workers Defense League, which in 1956 published a study of 49 victims of the military's security apparatus. I was case number 24.

Said the League, "A careful study of the Army Military Personnel Security program and its application to inducted men makes it difficult to avoid the conclusion that the ideal draftee is an only child of spontaneous generation who, despite a hermit childhood, has miraculously acquired the ability to read and write English but has never made use of these skills."

The draftee-victims all suffered "branding" in the form of a less than honorable separation from the service, based on various allegations concerning pre-service political activity—often in

When the Korean war broke out we didn't know most of what I.F. Stone was later to uncover; the totalitarians had invaded a dictatorship, our client state, which itself brutally suppressed all forms of dissent. We debated it. The Socialist Party's right wing supported the war. Totalitarianism had to be stopped; the South Korean regime could be reformed. The rest of us opposed it; you couldn't stop Communism by supporting reaction. Almost all of us agreed that "Stalinism" was bad.

The local Communist Party youth group handed out its futile, one-sided and unbelievable leaflets at the corner of Broad and Oxford in Philadelphia. They were rescued, as I recall, from what was close to a lynch mob by being arrested. There was no peace movement; a conscientious objector was a religious fanatic who had served time in a camp during World War II. In effect, political opposi-

One day I was ordered to Air Force Criminal Investigation Detachment and we went through several hours of the "nice guy, tough guy" interrogation routine. They had a file the size of a phone book on me, pretty accurate, too.

I confessed that I had indeed heard Irving Howe lecture on Faulkner, and a series of other heinous activities including discussing the CIA's role in the 1954 Guatemalan counterrevolution, an affair much in the British press in those days, with my army buddies.

I made a clean breast of as much as I remembered (since they had it all anyway) except for one little matter: I didn't give them anybody else's name. That turned out to be serious, for how could Uncle Sam be sure of my loyalty if I held back such valuable information? And how could I know for absolute certain that my socialist club buddies weren't committing espionage?

Well, I knew. I remained a private for two years. The brigade school was closed soon thereafter (the stuff they were teaching had been made obsolete and silly by the development of new weapons) and I was transferred to an ordnance camp where the Army kept all the spare parts for the new weaponry. There they put me on guard duty, with live ammo in my belt. A Russian saboteur could have screwed up every anti-aircraft artillery battery in England any one of those dreary nights, but I passed the test: no Russian showed up for me to shoot or let pass.

They shipped me home to Camp Kilmer. By now I knew the score. I got an attorney (long live the ACLU). The entire boatload was released except for me. They kept me to the last day of my 24 months, and my attorney was ready with a writ of *habeas corpus* in case they delayed. I spent my last weeks in uniform sorting dirty laundry with two members of the IWW, one VD case and a mysterious soldier who had once had an astonishing number of stripes on his tunic but now had none.

McCarthy had confronted the Army, and lost; that made two of us. But while McCarthyism was supposed to be dead, it lived on loud and clear. The atmosphere was thick with fear of informers, loyalty proceedings, firings, hearings. I had a separation from the Army with "character pending," which meant, supposedly, that they were still investigating. Meanwhile, no discharge money or G.I. Bill. I took a job in a university library. I hov-

ered around the edges of political meetings and my socialist friends and I would take long walks around the block to talk, looking over our shoulders. One day I got a phone call from a former member of the socialist club. He didn't want to talk on the phone. We rendezvoused in the middle of a state park in central Jersey and he told me he'd been visited by the FBI. The agents wanted to know all about the club, him, me, etc. Why? It was a waste of the taxpayers' money. He dropped out of graduate school and joined a Stalinist sect, the kind of group that we'd call Maoist nowadays. He took to wearing leather jackets. I never saw him again.

I finally got a hearing before an Army board at Ft. Dix, and I guess the officers were convinced that I was a naive fool who believed that being an informer was un-American, rather than a potential spy. Subsequently, I got my honorable separation. Many weren't so lucky.

## The end of the red scare?

Did the red scare destroy itself in the '50s? In 1962, while a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania, I took a temporary job with the American Friends Service Committee. My job was to help set up a student exchange trip to Moscow. There was follow-up correspondence to me from a Quaker in Moscow. In 1981 I collected \$1,000 (most of which I gave to

## A socialist in the army was suspect as potential spy.

the ACLU) from the CIA because that correspondence had been intercepted and a copy appeared in the file I secured via the FOIA. One for our side? Perhaps. What is more interesting is that my files also revealed that the FBI had been in touch with every employer I'd ever had, including the AFSC, to check my whereabouts, and each employer had supplied the requisite information. In May 1971, my file tells me, I was "observed" at my residence in Princeton, N.J. At that time I was on the FBI's security index, and I assume I still am. My number is 492609C.

Marty Oppenheimer is an associate professor of sociology at Rutgers University.



Marty Oppenheimer and friend in unhappier days.

connection with organizations on the then famous "Attorney General's List." In many cases, the government was aware of this information prior to a man's induction. Following cumbersome and sometimes lengthy and expensive legal proceedings, both within the armed forces and in civilian courts, many of these men finally did secure honorable separations. Ultimately the procedures were cleaned up, and the "List" was abolished, though this hardly affected the victim's FBI files (as I found out via the Freedom of Information Act).

On the day the Rosenbergs were executed I was in basic training at Ft. McClellan, Ala. I was unaware that I had already been "flagged" by the Army's security apparatus, because I had once belonged to Students for Wallace, later my university's socialist club and then a tiny sect not even on the List. The fighting in Korea had stopped; I was soon sent to a U.S. airbase in England. My company had the task of covering the field with a smoke-screen to protect the Strategic Air Command's B-52s in the event of a Soviet raid, a procedure that was quickly discovered to be obsolete, not to say silly. My company had the honor of having the highest VD and AWOL rate of any Army unit in England at the time.

What was it like, the Korean war, in the Truman-Eisenhower era, the days of loyalty-security hysteria that we now tend—wrongly, I think—to identify only with Joe McCarthy?

tion was smothered; our university club had a graduation party in '52, and we were swept aside like a thimbleful of fleas by events. Our favorite professor took the Fifth before a congressional committee and was fired; the university was blacklisted by the AAUP, not that it mattered.

The New York scene didn't seem much different. There it was possible to rise to the theoretical level of debating whether, after the revolution, there would be workers' councils and unions, or only workers' councils. A drunken poet, famous in the '20s as part of the Hemingway generation, graced some of our meetings. A member of the "Whoever the Hell the OPSL Is" tried to figure out how to keep comrades out of the draft by simulating drug addiction, while a Socialist Workers Party organizer argued that we ought to go in so as to learn how to shoot, and perhaps even organize soldiers' councils to preach "revolutionary defeatism." Irving Howe gave lectures on Faulkner to Independent Socialist League chapters that were monitored by FBI informers. The ISL was on the "List.")

After a month or so in the 45th Chemical Company I was abruptly transferred to the brigade school, where, thanks to my typing skills, I worked in supply. Instead of being confined to one SAC base, I, the security risk (as the Army saw it, and as I was soon to find out), was able to drive a truck to a half-dozen of them. I could have made some great movies—but what could I have done with rubles in London? And how much vodka can one soldier drink?

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# PERSPECTIVES

## Public opinion polls are often too public and far off base

By David Roediger

**I**N THE DAYS BEFORE WILSON Goode's election as Philadelphia's first black mayor, two of his white rivals reportedly considered allowing a poll to determine their fate. The poll loser was to withdraw in favor of a united candidacy against Goode. If the deal had been consummated it would not have been the first time in recent memory that polls worked to the detriment of a black political leader or of the black population generally.

For much of his mayoral primary campaign, Chicago's Harold Washington was laid open to the charge that his candidacy was merely a ploy to take votes from one of the white candidates in order to elect the other. In the Boston mayoral primary, black hopeful Mel King was termed "unelectable" and was therefore deserted by many whites and by trade union leaders whose politics approximated his. King easily won a spot in the upcoming runoff election by coming within a handful of votes of leading all candidates in the primary.

Widely publicized polls branded the



Chicago Mayor Harold Washington

Washington and King campaigns less than viable. Some denied that each had a solid electoral base in the black community. In Washington's primary, pollsters insisted, nearly until election night, that one black vote in every four or five would go to incumbent Jane Byrne.

The polls were dead wrong, but election post mortems seldom explored their failure to measure black public opinion with accuracy. Indeed the fault of the polls may well be that the opinions they

measure are too "public." Counting the responses to a phone call from who knows who apparently only poorly predicts private voting booth behavior.

Nor does it appear that the pollsters or the media are about to learn the lesson that extreme care must be taken when powerful institutions presume to quantify what largely disempowered people are thinking. The recent poll gauging Jesse Jackson a more than three-to-one loser to Ronald Reagan in the former's home state of Illinois has excited little skepticism, nor has that poll's finding that Jackson would run the risk of losing the black vote in Chicago in a Democratic primary. Surveys showing Reagan with 13 percent or more support among the black electorate have provoked neither laughter nor sharp questions regarding the methods of the poll and what is actually being measured.

This same unwillingness to consider the social context of power relationships in which polls occur reached its logical, although absurd, conclusion in Grenada. A widely quoted CBS poll there found 91 percent of Grenadians in favor of U.S. invasion of their nation.

The notion that occupiers can conduct reliable polls among the occupied is so patently bizarre that it requires little criticism. Indeed, few would have trusted British polls in occupied areas of revolutionary America, Nazi polls in Vichy France or Soviet polls in Hungary.

As troubling as the idea of the Grenada poll, which stands as the cultural counterpart to U.S. military attack, is the polls execution. Just as American casualties were the only ones that counted in early reports on the invasion, only Americans are an issue in the poll. We learn from the pollsters that American troops were a welcome addition to Grenada, whose citizens also are said to be-

lieve that the American medical students were, in fact, in danger. But we learn nothing of Grenadian attitudes toward the execution of ex-Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, a subject on which polls, even taken by the occupying country, might have shed some light. Did Grenadians "support" U.S. invasion to avenge Bishop's death or to set up a U.S.-backed regime? That question would have been crucial to any serious poll. Apparently it was not even asked.

Of course the Grenada poll reflects the general overawe Americans feel toward such surveys. But, like the acceptance of improbable polls regarding black candidates at home, it also reflects racism. If the results show that large numbers of blacks are comfortable with whites running the cities or occupying the nation in which they live, few questions are likely to be raised about the poll.

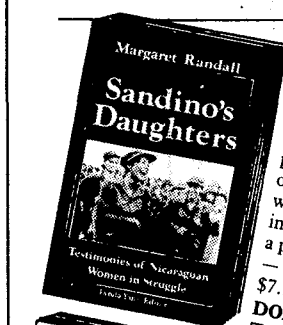
David Roediger, a Chicago historian, currently holds fellowships from the American Council of Learned Societies and the American Philosophical Societies.

*The notion that occupiers can conduct reliable polls among the occupied—in the ghetto or on Grenada—is patently bizarre.*

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**The Fateful Triangle: the United States, Israel and the Palestinians**

By Noam Chomsky  
South End Press, 481 pp.,  
\$10, paper

By George Scialabba

On June 12, 1982, three-quarters of a million people marched through New York City and assembled in Central Park to demand a freeze on nuclear weapons. At the same moment, a few blocks away, several hundred people gathered outside the Israeli consulate to protest Israel's invasion of Lebanon, then six days old. *The Fateful Triangle*, Noam Chomsky's latest book, raises the possibility that the latter demonstration may have been the more significant one.

How is a nuclear conflict between the superpowers most likely to come about? A "bolt-from-the-blue" first strike (or its equivalent, a Soviet invasion of Western Europe) is clearly suicidal, and therefore unlikely. War through technical malfunction is not unlikely—in fact is inevitable in the long run as both sides adopt "launch on warning" strategies—but at any given moment it is a remote contingency. Far more likely than either of these possibilities is that nuclear weapons will be used in the future as they have come closest to being used in the past: as part of one superpower's response to the other's intervention somewhere in the Third World.

It should be obvious that now, and for a long time to come, the most likely arena of superpower confrontation is the Mideast. As Chomsky argues in this book and in his other recent writings, a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is, for Americans, a matter not merely of abstract justice but of immediate self-interest. And on this issue, above all others, illusions can be lethal.

But unfortunately, this is exactly where illusions are rampant, at least in the U.S.

In his previous books, most notably *American Power and the New Mandarins* (1969), *The Political Economy of Human Rights* (1979) and *Towards a New Cold War* (1982), Chomsky has pursued a dual purpose: to describe the realities of domination within the American global system and to analyze the domestic political ideology that conceals or rationalizes those realities. *The Fateful Triangle* continues that dual focus, exhaustively documenting Israeli military, economic and diplomatic policies toward the Palestinians and relentlessly dissecting the abundant illusions about these policies among those who finance them and therefore share responsibility for them—i.e., us.

One way to appreciate the scope and rigor of this extraordinary book is to consider Chomsky's demystification of three terms that loom large in American political discussion about the Mideast: "rejectionism," "terrorism" and "support for Israel."

## "Rejectionism."

The first of these terms means rejection of the right of national self-determination for one of the two peoples who inhabit the territory of Israel/Palestine. In

## MIDEAST

# Palestinians, Israelis and us

American parlance this term has been applied almost exclusively to the position of the Palestinians and their representatives (the PLO) or sponsors (the Arab governments). This alleged unwavering Arab "rejectionism" is widely held up as the main obstacle to a peaceful settlement.

As Chomsky shows, that view was never more than half true, and since the early '70s has been wholly untrue. For example, in 1970 President Nasser of Egypt declared that "it will be possible to institute a durable peace between Israel and the Arab states, not excluding economic and diplomatic relations, if Israel evacuates the occupied territories and accepts a settlement of the problem of Palestinian refugees."

In 1971 Anwar Sadat offered Israel a full peace treaty on the pre-June 1967 borders, with security guarantees, recognized borders and no mention of a Palestinian state.

In 1972 King Hussein proposed a confederation of Jordan and the West Bank under Jordanian auspices (which is supposedly the Israeli Labor Party's position).

In 1975 three official and semi-official spokesmen for the PLO publicly indicated a willingness to accept a Palestinian state in the occupied territories and thereafter renounce violence as a means toward national unification.

In 1976, at the instigation of Egypt, Syria and Jordan, a UN Security Council resolution was introduced (and vetoed by the U.S.) calling for a Palestinian state alongside Israel and for "appropriate arrangements...to guarantee...the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all states in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries."

In 1977 (according to a report in the *New York Times*) Egypt, Syria and Jordan "informed the U.S. that they would sign peace treaties with Israel as part of an overall Middle East settlement." Later that year the PLO promptly endorsed a joint U.S.-Soviet communique (angrily rejected by Israel and then repudiated by the U.S.) calling for a two-state solution, with peace treaties guaranteed by the superpowers.

Some, perhaps all, of these Arab initiatives were ambiguous or inadequate. But they were all, without exception, ignored or rebuffed by Israel (with U.S. backing) and have subsequently disappeared from the public record in the U.S. Moreover, they were all rejected by Labor governments—which is significant, since the Israeli Labor Party is currently the best hope of most American liberals and even some socialists.

In fact, as Chomsky documents at length, the mainstream of the Labor Party (including every party chief from David Ben-Gurion to Shimon Peres) has been no less consistent than

Menachem Begin's Likud in its rejection of Palestinian national self-determination. Rhetorical differences notwithstanding, both Labor and Likud governments have sponsored Jewish settlements in the occupied territories and have suppressed all meaningful forms of political self-organization there. Though the Likud has been more explicit about its intention to retain control over the territories, all Labor programs have envisioned Israeli control over the West Bank (and, crucially, over its resources of water and cheap labor), while denying Palestinian nationhood.

As for the Camp David accords, immediately after their

able in principle. However, that is the only time the term is used in American accounts of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This is oddly restricted usage. What one side in any conflict calls "terrorism," the other side invariably calls "reprisals." And for some reason, the violence perpetrated by states (at least states friendly to the U.S.) is rarely considered by mainstream American commentators as being on the same moral level as that of guerrilla movements.

But what is even more curious about the exclusive use of the word "terrorism" in connection with PLO (or Libyan or Iraqi) violence is the latter's comparative numerical insignificance. According to an official Israeli estimate (cited by Chomsky), 106 civilians have been killed in northern Israel by terrorists since the late '60s; and according to an investigation by a former Israeli police official, 282 Israeli civilians in all have been killed in terrorist attacks since 1967. The number of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians killed by the Israeli armed forces since the late '60s exceeds these figures by an enormous margin (perhaps as much as 50 to one, though Chomsky makes no such calculations). And this comparison leaves out the hundreds of thousands of Arab civilians involuntarily displaced in wars and "reprisals"

them near despair over their lack of support from American liberals and American Jews. Their view, as Chomsky formulates it, is that the "support for Israel" (i.e., for its worst excesses of militarism and chauvinism) shown by most American Jewish organizations and by journals like *Commentary* and *The New Republic* should be called by another name: "support for Israel's continued moral degeneration and, quite possibly, ultimate physical destruction."

Taken together, the illusions implicit in current American usage of the terms "rejectionism," "terrorism" and "support for Israel" form a sort of ideological subsystem within American popular culture—along with other illusions that Chomsky demolishes: that Arab citizens of Israel enjoy full civic equality; that the Israeli occupation of the West Bank has been "benign" and "enlightened"; that the political aspirations of Palestinians in the occupied territories have never been clearly expressed; that the Kahan Commission report on the Sabra/Shatila massacre was a "sublime" moral achievement; and so on.

But like all other ideologies, this one has a basis in interests that are by no means illusions. With subtlety and precision Chomsky explains the official



adoption the Israeli Knesset passed a resolution asserting that "after the transition period laid down in the Camp David accords, Israel will raise its claim and act to fulfill its rights to sovereignty over Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district [i.e., the occupied territories]."

Chomsky quotes Abba Eban's astonished reaction to this resolution—he said that there was no precedent "in the jurisprudence of any government for such a total contradiction between an international agreement and a national statement of policy." And of course, this "national statement of policy" is well on its way to being fully implemented.

As Chomsky points out, there is now an international consensus for a two-state settlement, with guarantees of security. The only significant exceptions to this consensus are the Rejection Front faction of the PLO, the Israeli government (along with most of the Labor opposition) and the U.S. Obviously, these realities do not exactly square with current American usage of the term "rejectionism."

## "Terrorism."

The term "terrorism" is another curious case. It is properly applied to Palestinian violence against Israel civilians, which is as futile in practice as it is intoler-

from 1948 to 1982.

Semantic dishonesty can be deadly. The Israeli government has attempted, with some success, to eliminate the word "Palestinian" from official Israeli discourse, routinely substituting the word "terrorist." This demotion of the Palestinians from human status made it possible, among other things, to cut off food, water and electricity to West Beirut during the summer of 1982, to bomb refugee camps (towns, actually) into rubble and to ship 9,000 Palestinian males to concentration camps in Israel. The American mass media, through their consistently partisan use of the word "terrorism," also deserve some credit for these events.

## "Support for Israel."

Serious criticism of Israeli state policies is rare in American politics or intellectual life. One device used to maintain this situation is labeling apologists for current Israeli policies as "supporters of Israel"—and in turn labeling opponents of those policies as "anti-Israel." As should be obvious, this verbal gambit is sheer demagoguery, comparable to the branding of those who opposed the Indochina war as "anti-American." Yet it is remarkably effective. Chomsky quotes numerous Israeli doves, many of

*Continued confrontation between Israelis and Arabs lengthens the nuclear shadows in the Mideast.*

American view of Israel as a "strategic asset," a bulwark against radical regimes in the Mideast (and increasingly elsewhere, as Israel expands its arms sales and military, intelligence and diplomatic support to right-wing regimes in Latin America and Africa).

Finally, drawing on the speculations of American and Israeli political and military analysts, Chomsky outlines some possible scenarios of future conflict in the region, several of which end in superpower confrontation.

*The Fateful Triangle* is the best book I know of on any aspect of contemporary politics. It is also, arguably, the most important. For the nuclear shadows are lengthening in the Mideast, and they fall on the rest of us as well. We are slouching toward Armageddon. All that can halt this drift toward catastrophe is a popular movement fueled by the sort of unflinching intellectual rigor and generous moral imagination to be found in Chomsky's earlier books, and now *The Fateful Triangle*.

George Scialabba has written on the Mideast for the *Boston Phoenix*, *Harvard Magazine* and *New Outlook* (Tel Aviv).



By Lennard J. Davis

Costa-Gavras' latest film *Hanna K.* is missing. At least it's missing from the movie theater nearest you. If you recall *Z*, *State of Siege* or the recent box-office hit *Missing* starring Jack Lemmon and Sissy Spacek, it might seem strange that Costa-Gavras' latest movie is playing at only one theater in the entire U.S. (at the time we went to press). The *New York Sunday Times* has stopped carrying ads for the film. And *Hanna K.*'s opening in other cities is uncertain.

How is it possible that a movie that stars Jill Clayburgh, distributed by Universal, made by the director of *Missing* could have such a poor distribution and a miserable start?

We might consider the story. Hanna Kaufman, a young Israeli lawyer is assigned as a public defender to the case of Selim Bakri, a Palestinian who has illegally crossed over into Israel in an attempt to recover his family's house. She wins the case—just barely—and he is sent back to Jordan rather than being jailed as a terrorist.

However, Selim returns and offers Hanna \$2,000 to press a claim for his property. When she is about to win that case, she is convinced by friends and associates that a compromise would be a better solution. The Palestinian has only to "lose" the case, go to jail for eight months, get South African citizenship and return to claim his property "legitimately."

While the legal case is going on, Hanna's boyfriend turns out to be the prosecuting attorney (Gabriel Byrne)—a situation that creates a conflict reminiscent of the battle between Katherine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy in *Adam's Rib*. Things get worse when Clayburgh finds out she is pregnant and decides to have the baby alone. So, she calls her estranged Parisian husband Victor Bonnet (Jean Yanne) to come and help her out. The complications that follow between husband and boyfriend become compounded when Clayburgh rescues the hunger-striking Selim from jail and takes him as her



Jill Clayburgh (above) plays a cold character in the film, which director Costa-Gavras (top) says uses Brechtian techniques.

lover. And the movie finally explodes on an ambiguous note as Selim ducks out to avoid arrest on charges of setting off a bomb, which he may or may not have detonated while living with Hanna.

The controversial nature of the plot of the film may give some viewers grounds for complaint. Despite charges of an anti-Israel stance, the movie seems quite consciously to focus on the problems of Israelis—even humane ones—who are occupiers in alien territory. For example, in one scene a group of Israelis round up suspected terrorists and then blow up a house in a refugee camp. The camera rests on one

# ART»ENTERTAINMENT

## MOVIES



## Costa-Gavras' *Hanna K.* is missing in U.S.

young Israeli soldier who averts his eyes, obviously pained, as the house goes up in smoke.

### Costa-Gavras' explanation.

Costa-Gavras, in a telephone interview from Paris, commented, "When the soldier looks away he

views and it may die a natural death." The memo goes on to furnish sample objections to be sent to local newspapers.

Such a coordinated opposition has made the movie's distribution difficult, according to Costa-Gavras. "The movie has not been treated simply as a movie. Everyone is reacting with a prejudice about the Palestinian and Israeli situation. Generally in the U.S. and France, there is a very anti-Palestinian thinking and feeling. The pro-Israeli followers are much more numerous and influential than the others."

The bad critical reviews are a case in point. It seems that in the U.S. objections to political movies are made on aesthetic rather than political grounds. Scores of mediocre movies are produced each year, but when a film with a controversial subject like *Hanna K.* or *Under Fire* appears, the first line of attack is always that the film is not well made. However, few critics get agitated if a movie like *Flashdance* or *Stayin' Alive* is not well made.

Costa-Gavras notes that "the *New York Times* critic says that the director is in the pro-Palestinian camp. But by saying that, he shows what his own camp is. Nobody thinks about that. You see, newspapers have an important effect, not only in approving or rejecting a movie but more significantly in explaining what a film is about."

So, why was *Missing* so well received in the U.S., despite its anti-American point of view, and *Hanna K.* so poorly accepted? According to one Hollywood screenwriter, "You won't find a

single pro-Palestinian in the entire movie industry. They hate them and they hate the PLO." The issue of Israel and the Palestinians cuts between political beliefs and personal commitments. Costa-Gavras believes that *Missing* was popular "because the main characters are popular, the theme—a father's search for his lost son—is popular. It's very easy to be against Mr. Pinochet. But the Palestinians are an unpopular people...so we made an unpopular movie."

Is there any way to make a movie that would sell in the U.S. about the Palestinians? "Yes," Costa-Gavras answers wryly, "if you show them being terrorists, I am sure you can have a big success."

### Brechtian techniques.

An interesting choice in the film was to make Jill Clayburgh play a character who is essentially cold and not particularly likeable.

"It would have been easier to have a character with much more emotion—the emotional Jewish women we see in lots of other films. But it was important to have Hanna be colder. It was a much more Brechtian movie than others I have made."

Brecht's idea of distancing the audience so that they can make judgments without being swayed by the emotion and spectacle of theater is relevant to the whole project of *Hanna K.* The critics seem to have missed—in the coolness and flatness of parts of the film—a clue about how we are meant to watch this difficult movie. *Hanna K.* is not a sentimental piece of propaganda but a coolly abstract statement about the nature of justice and the contradictions of the political process in Israel.

The scene in which the young soldier averts his eyes from the house that is about to be blown up, then, becomes a metaphor for the whole film. The main characters avert their eyes from the Palestinian problem. The movie is more about not seeing than seeing. This wishing not to see explains how, in Costa-Gavras' view, good people can live with the unlivable.

Some will find this movie cool and unmoving. Its cinematography is unspectacular—this is no *Battle of Algiers* or technicolor travelogue about the Holy Land. The screenplay—written by the late Franco Solinas who in fact did write Ponte Corvo's *Battle of*

*Algiers*, along with Costa Gavras' *State of Siege*—is witty, complex and touching. It reveals, more than any other film yet made, the contradictions of the Israeli-Palestinian problem as shown through the development of characters.

But something seems to have happened to the story when it got to the editing room. Some scenes drag on painfully long, while in others the pacing is off. Jill Clayburgh was probably not the best choice for Hanna. There is something too upper west side and not West Bank about her.

*The movie is not treated as a movie, Costa-Gavras said. Everyone is reacting with a prejudice on the Mideast.*

Although she is supposed to be defending a client, she could easily be shopping for clothes in Bloomingdale's. In fact, it is an open question how she manages to win court cases before skeptical judges with such seeming incompetence.

Nevertheless, there are memorable scenes and characters in this film. Jean Yanne's portrayal of the ex-husband is wonderful. He is a pudgy, sloppy, cynical knight in shining armor who always wants to get Hanna back in bed but never succeeds, yet winds up helping her more than anyone else.

The closing sequence—where Hanna has a kind of mad tea party with her ex-husband, her ex-boyfriend, her Palestinian lover and her newborn baby boy—provides a comic counterpoint to the closing moments, which is a visual and emotional shocker that brilliantly sums up in a final explosive freeze-frame the problems of living in a society that has become habituated to force and violence. These last two seconds make up for the movie's other defects.

**Lennard J. Davis teaches English at Columbia University and is the author of *Factual Fictions*.**

## CALENDAR

Use the calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is **\$20.00 for one insertion, \$30.00 for two insertions and \$15.00 for each additional insert**, for copy of 50 words or less (additional words are 50¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of **Beth Maschlinot**.

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#### November 29

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### CHICAGO, ILL.

#### December 1

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ter, 1750 W. Harrison, AB Dick Auditorium. Thursday, 6:30 p.m. Two new films: "A Call for Peace" and "In Our Defense." C.M.E. credit—category II. Everyone welcome.

### PHILADELPHIA, PA.

#### December 6

Prepared to shed or modify old concepts? Jay Mandel will speak on *The Economics of Feasible Socialism*, a new book by Alec Nove. Discussion will follow. 8:00 p.m., Summit Church, Greene and Westview Sts. Requested donation \$3, \$1.50 students and unemployed. Philadelphia Democratic Socialists of America.

### NEW YORK, N.Y.

#### December 29 & 30

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# Working

Continued from page 16

Low Pay Unit, because there are only 119 inspectors to police the wages of three million workers, and because there is pressure to do away with the minimum wage as a means of creating new lower-paying jobs.

"There are many Asian women in London sewing piece work at home for the equivalent of 25 cents an hour," MacLennan said. "Almost any level of pay is acceptable because of the great need."

Even in Sweden, which has a Minister on Equality between Women and Men, reality does not live up to reputation. "Eighty-one percent of all women with children under seven years of age work," said Ylva Ericsson, an adviser in the Ministry of Labor in Stockholm. "But nearly half of all working women work part time, and women are still primarily responsible for homes and children. Women spend 35 hours a week working in the home, Ericsson said, as compared to 7-8 hours a week for men."

Sweden has a national child care policy under which parents can take turns in a 9-month fully paid leave after a baby is born. But, Ericsson said, "three-quarters of new fathers do not take a single day of leave."

Throughout Europe, conference participants said, women have been lobbying for shorter work days as a means of allowing parents more time for domestic

life. Now, with high unemployment, unions have joined the push for shorter hours to keep more people working; except the male-dominated unions are pushing for shorter work weeks. The crucial difference, Cook pointed out, is that, given the double standard when it comes to housework, longer weekends would probably give men more recreation time and women "more time to cook."

## Toast of the town.

If the mood of the conference during the day was sobering, the nights were more celebratory. At a birthday dinner for Cook, champagne from Italy was uncorked, toasts were proposed and songs were sung around a table of about 75 people. Frank Miller, a labor relations professor, recalled in a rhymed toast Cook's triumphs at Cornell—like the time in the late '50s when she won the right for faculty women to eat at the Statler Club on campus.

*The crusty Cornell clubmen swore:*

*"She shall not pass, this upstart female battler."*

*But when at last she left the meeting floor—*

*Behold a fully integrated Statler.*

During dinner, everyone had their own Alice Cook story. Sarah Elbert, now a history professor at the State University of New York at Binghamton, recalled how Cook had come to her rescue when \$250 in parking tickets stood between her and her doctorate. As a graduate student with small children, Elbert had to wait each morning for their school bus, then drive like mad to her own class. She'd park in a faculty parking space so she

wouldn't be late, frequently getting tickets. When it came time to graduate, the university told her to pay the tickets or forfeit the degree.

"I promised to pay when I had the money later, I tried to get a loan, but nothing worked," Elbert said. "In desperation, I went to see Alice, who was the university's first ombudsman at the time. I told her the story and she just said, 'Okay.'"

Cook, who had a son in 1939 and raised him alone after a divorce, knew firsthand the problems of working mothers.

After dinner, Cook was given a thick package of telegrams and wires from friends who couldn't make the conference, and an umbrella edged with the words "Failure is impossible." Then everyone stood, overcome with the warmth of the evening, and joined hands to sing "Solidarity Forever." Cook blew kisses.

The next morning at breakfast, the last day of the conference, Cook said she was both encouraged and discouraged by the reports she'd heard: "There's no question progress has slowed down." But she

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said she was proud of American leadership. "Our legislation is so superior to the legislation of any other country. We have class action suits. We have the militancy and assertiveness of consciousness-raising groups on issues like rape and sexual harassment. We have a platform to stand on now."

She said what American working mothers need most is a national policy on child care ("We're the only modern nation that doesn't have one"), including a maternal bill of rights, something like the GI bill, to compensate women for the time they lose to childbearing. New career patterns have to be legitimized, she believes, patterns that include part-time employment and interruptions. The problems of working parents must be taken seriously, she said; they are social problems requiring public solutions.

Then she was off again to the conference, driving her small yellow car into the sparkling fall morning, dodging streams of students on their way to class.

**Mary Ellen Schoonmaker, a working mother, has written on women's issues for Mother Jones and The Progressive.**

SYLVIA

By Nicole Hollander



## CLASSIFIED

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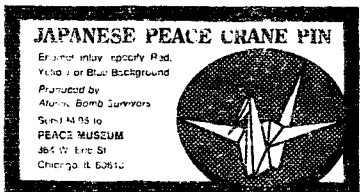
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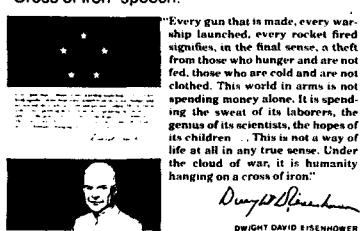
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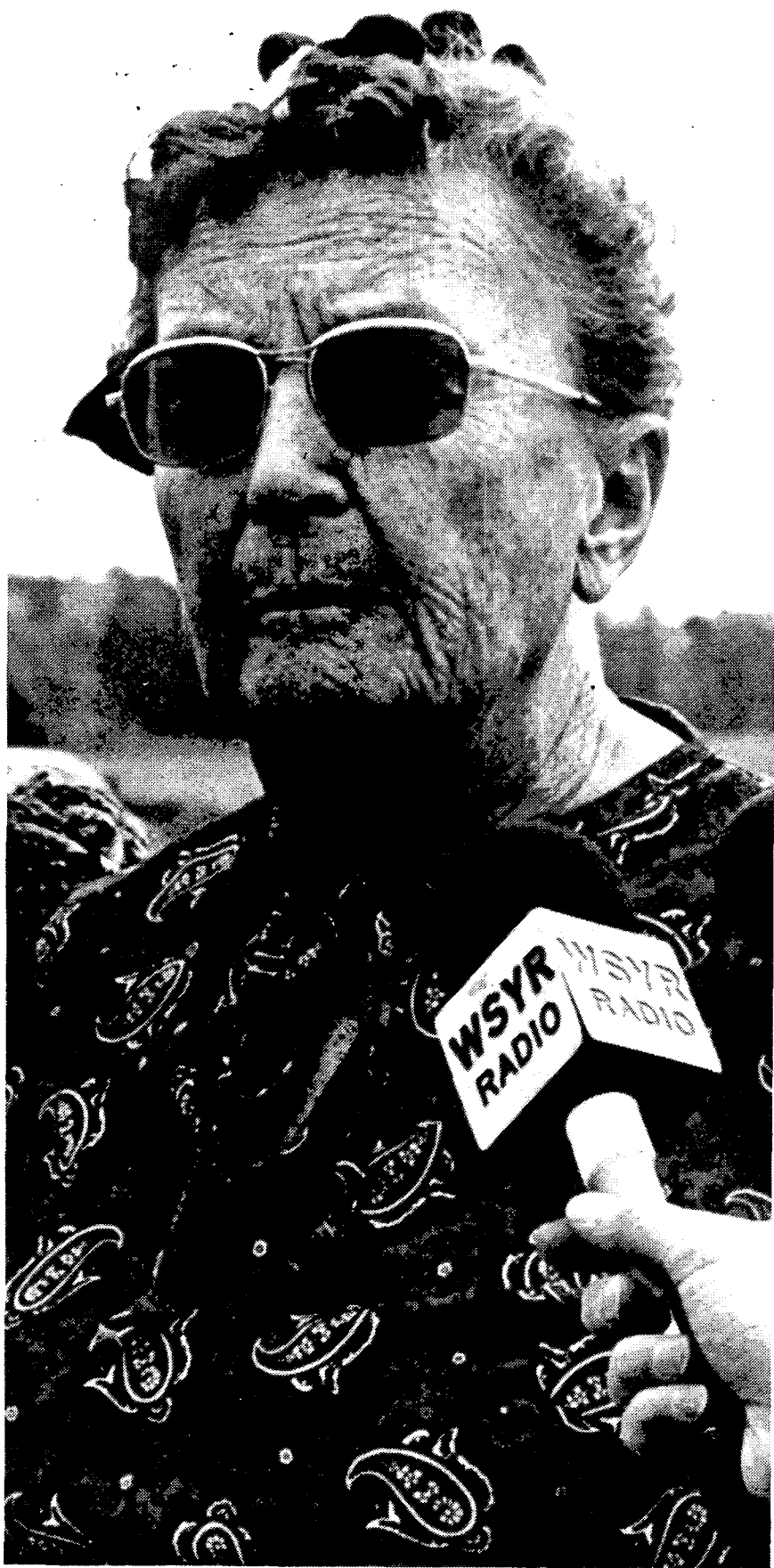
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# WORKING



*At age 80 Alice Cook is still on the job—looking for ways to give employed mothers a break.*

Women from all over the world came to Ithaca the first week in October to a conference at Cornell University in honor of the 80th birthday of Alice Cook, professor emerita of the university's School of Industrial and Labor Relations, international feminist and one of those remarkable people who seem to be able to do everything. She swims every morning at 7:30; is finishing her seventh or eighth book—she can't remember which—and recently led a "tasteful" demonstration against nuclear missiles at the Seneca Army Depot, where, adorned with a hat and white gloves, she debated a military wife dressed in her husband's fatigues on the use of the flag in an anti-war protest.

During the Depression, Cook did union organizing for the textile workers and marched on picket lines. Later she worked in adult education, labor education and on arbitration issues. When she began teaching at Cornell in her 50s, she was already a labor expert.

"She is an inspiring figure," said Vicki Saporta, the new director of organizing for the Teamsters and the first woman to hold that post, who met Cook while a student at Cornell. "Just to be a woman in that field in those early days was an accomplishment."

These days Cook is probably best known for her international research on the needs of working women, particularly working mothers. She did the bulk of that research after she retired from teaching at Cornell in 1972. Although she had accomplished much before, you could say that, like the trees, her true colors seemed to come out in the autumn of her life: a deep concern for women all over the world who work hard at an office or in a factory for low pay and then come home, bone tired, to even more work without any pay.

"The condition of working women is the same within both socialist and non-socialist systems," said Cook, a small woman with a strong voice. "There is little or no consideration of the goals of the women's movement."

The conference planners invited women from countries where Cook had done research to report on the status of women and work: Russia, Japan, China, Israel, France, Italy, Sweden, Yugoslavia, East and West Germany, Switzerland, England and the U.S. While Cook sat proudly in the front of the conference room, a white carnation pinned to her suit, her friends and colleagues told her the good and bad news: the quest for equality has come a long way in the past decade with the gains of the women's movement. But those gains are now threatened by an overall job decline brought on by the international recession, advances in automation and the shift of low-skilled jobs usually held by women to the Third World.

There is talk in West Germany, said Hanna Beate Schopp-Schilling, director of the Aspen Institute-Berlin, of keeping women from going back to work after childbirth and giving them a child care allowance in order to free up jobs for men. (Only in 1972 did West Germans do away with a law that allowed a man to forbid his wife to work if he didn't want her to, and to force her to get a job if he felt they needed the money. A similar law is still on the books in Switzerland, where women won the right to vote in 1970.)

Meanwhile, in England, an official of Margaret Thatcher's government said publicly, "If the Lord had wanted us all to go out to work equally, he wouldn't have created men and women." A law guaranteeing women equal pay is almost useless, said Emma MacLennan, a research officer in the British government's

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**N**o matter how you go, it's not easy to get to Ithaca, N.Y., from New York City. It's a long drive—highway after highway and then, as you get closer, skippy, winding roads through one-stoplight towns and hilly farm country.

But this fall, the trees on the route were worth the slow going. In early October the region around the Finger Lakes was already rich with deep reds, sunny yellows and all shades in between. One poetic theory is that these are the leaves' true colors, which appear after they lose the chlorophyll and the green of their youth.

**By Mary Ellen Schoonmaker**